

From the
PRESIDENT'S
DESK



One of the complaints most frequently heard in the League of Women Voters is that there is never enough time to do all the things we want to do. Since the national Board can only meet at the most three times a year, this is also its complaint.

There is continual need, for example, to probe deeply into all the Program subjects; to examine at frequent intervals our various activities in terms of the purpose of the League; to explore new ideas and to develop fresh approaches to old problems.

Pressure of time and volume of work restrict us, members and Board alike.

At the moment there is pressing reason to give concentrated attention to the field of foreign policy.

(Continued from Page 3)

alone. If the tax rate ceiling were imposed by freezing it into the Constitution, the federal government would be deprived of the flexibility necessary if it is to contribute to economic stability and growth. Income taxes now make an important contribution to that end. When times are good, the tax system tends to absorb inflationary pressures by taking a relatively large percentage of private income; when business is poor, the tax system encourages consumption and stimulates business expenditures by taking a relatively small percentage of private incomes. These effects can be achieved by changes in rates and exemptions when they are needed, by congressional action.

Under the amendment, tax collections could not rise as much in prosperous years nor fall as much in depressed years as under present law. This result would be compounded if heavier sales taxes were enacted to make up for loss in income revenues, since sales taxes are less sensitive and affect those least able to pay.

The last national Convention expressed overwhelming interest in the international field, but the range of ideas was so broad that a satisfactory focus could not be found.

It is well to remember, too, that only through its national Program can the League concern itself with international subjects. Since citizens must assume a responsibility for the development of U. S. foreign policy, this is an area of proper, in fact indispensable activity for the League. It therefore seems incumbent upon the national Board to find ways to help the members determine the role of the League in this complex and insistent field.

With these things in mind the Board has established two informal groups which are giving this

INDEX

Vol. VI, Nos. 1 through 16

(April 1, 1956, through March 15, 1957)

CIVIL SERVICE: How High Is Up in Civil Service? 11/15

CONGRESSIONAL ROUNDUP: 8/15

CONGRESSIONAL SPOTLIGHT: 4/1, 6/1,

6/15, 7/15

ECONOMICS: What's the GNP to You? 6/15;

The Economic Report, 2/1; The Federal Budget, 2/1; A Taxing Problem, 3/15

ELECTIONS AND VOTING: The High Cost of Campaigning, What to Do About It?

4/15

FOREIGN AID: Mutual Security — Well-

Chosen Words, 4/1; League Statement, 2/1

INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES: Liberty and Se-

curity, 12/15; Security at Work, 2/15

INTERNAL SECURITY: Commission on Se-

curity, a Preliminary Report, 4/1; Security

at Work, 2/15

LEAGUE: University of Michigan Survey:

4/15 (In Search of the Answers), 12/1 (Do

It Now); National Program 1956-58, 5/15;

They Knew What They Wanted (LWV Con-

vention), 6/1; League President Honored,

6/1; National Board Appointments (Mrs.

Dreyfous, Mrs. Richards), Nominating Com-

mittee, Policies and Procedures Committee,

6/15; League Official Honored (Mrs. Leon-

ard), 7/15; Mrs. Stephens Appointed to

U. S. National Commission of UNESCO, 8/15;

League Receives Award, 11/15; From the

President's Desk, 9/15 (University of Mi-

chigan Survey), 12/1 and 12/15 (Focus on

the Future), 3/15 (Foreign Policy Explora-

tory Committees); Budget, 2/15; Council

to Meet, 3/15

MIDDLE EAST: See Suez Crisis (9/15) and

Reports from the U.N. (12/1, 12/15, 1/15);

Leaguer Makes a "Go See" Trip, 12/1; Mid-

dle East Request, 1/15; Middle East Reso-

lution, 3/15

PARTY PLATFORMS SUMMARIZED: 9/15

PURE FOOD AND DRUG ACT, 50th Anni-

versary, 6/15

STATE OF THE UNION: 1/15

SUEZ CRISIS: 9/15

TRADE: A New Way to Skin a Cat, 6/1;

Letter from President Eisenhower, 6/1; To

Put It Simply, 7/15; Trade Is Busting

Out All Over, 7/15; On the Trade Front,

1/15

UNITED NATIONS: Disarmament Dilemma,

4/15; The Right Way Is Through the United

Nations, 11/15; How the General Assembly

Works, 12/1; Reports from the U.N., #1

(Short Haul and Long Pull) 12/1, #2 (To

Be, or Not To Be, a Nation) 12/15, #3

(Greater than the Force of Armies) 1/15,

#4 (Hungary, and the Lessons Learned)

(Growth Created Problems) 2/1; Focus on

the Future, 2/1, 12/15, 1/15, 2/1

VOTERS SERVICE: Never Take No for an

Answer, 11/15

WATER: Till the Well Runs Dry? 10/15

INDEX: THE NATIONAL VOTER: 1/15, 2/1,

7/1/52, 1/15/53, 7/1/53, 2/15/54, 8/31/54,

3/15/55, 8/15/55, 3/15/56, 3/15/57

subject sustained and undivided attention. They will report to the Board sufficiently in advance of the 1958 Convention so that their findings may be widely shared. One group—or Exploratory Committee as it has been called—is meeting in Chicago and the other is working in Washington, D. C. Each committee has approximately 20 persons participating in it; the individuals assume their own expenses and they come from several nearby states.

The objectives of these committees are three-fold: 1) to select the most crucial issues of a worldwide character and determine the role of the United States in relation to them; 2) to examine the responsibility of citizens in regard to the development of U. S. policy on these subjects; and 3) finally, in view of the foregoing, to ascertain what particular contribution the League might render citizens in order to promote in the field of foreign policy informed political participation.

The national Board anticipates that the work of these highly qualified committees will be of substantial assistance to the League throughout the national program-making period prior to Convention. Their conclusions in no way will be binding, but they should be of immense value in developing sound judgments in regard to future League decisions. It is also expected that the experience gained by League members throughout the country during the Focus on the Future project will prove to be of material assistance.

Ruey Marvin Lee

President

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